

THE EXPOSITION
BABIES, *An Idyl of
the Fine Arts Colonnade*



By EDITH KINNEY STELLMANN
Illustrated by LOUIS J. STELLMANN



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"If you seek the colonnade very early in the morning
you may hear what the little baby statues
think and know."

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Before Dawn

There's a pale, silver glint in the sky;
There's a hush that is deep and serene,
 And a bright, morning star
 That is shining, afar,
Looks down with a sly, twinkling mien.

For even the birdies are sleeping
 And Day is wrapped, warm, in his bed
 Though a
 Dear, little,
 Gay, little
 Blue Bell
Is, pensively, nodding her head.

'Tis a time when the Fairies are pausing
 In their games and their dances, so wild.
'Tis a moment when Nature is prankish:-
 Full of capers and tricks as a child.

If, perchance, you are lucky as I
And have wandered abroad at this hour,
 You have talked as you wish
 With the frogs and the fish
And have kissed the sweet lips of Wild Flower.

-Edith Kinney Stellmann.

THE EXPOSITION BABIES



"It was Wild Flower who lifted her face for a morning salute."

In the Colonnade

IF YOU are up very early in the morning and seek the colonnade of the Fine Arts Palace—and if you know how to be just as quiet as a bayleaf tree—you may hear what the little, baby statues think and know.

Some are jolly, little chaps, piping, merrily, on reeds, playing with frogs and fish or standing sturdily on the hard shell of a tortoise. All are alluring—so alluring that few people have passed through this wondrous colonnade without a smile and a cheery word for each of the tiny folk.

It was Wild Flower who, quite naturally, lifted her face for a morning salute and who first confided in me.

Wild Flower told me that she considered Humans almost as charming to visit as her own dear companions who



"Young Pan stopped blowing his pipes long enough to call out a greeting."

In the Colonnade

stayed in the colonnade all the time and who never cared whether it was clear or foggy—whether the golden California sun shone or whether a pale sliver of a moon took its place in the sky above.

Humans came all day, she said, but mostly on the sunniest days and never once did they come after the lights went out. She thought it very funny—till I told her that Humans went home and slept, at least some of them did.

She laughed, very heartily, at that, and seemed to think it quite the most amusing thing she had ever heard.

Young Pan heard her laughter and stopped blowing on his pipes long enough to call out a greeting. They are the best of friends—and I am told that in the night, when Humans are not about, Young Pan plays the most enticing of



"The Wood Nymph did a toe dance and almost lost her balance."

In the Colonnade

dance-music and Wild Flower forgets to be so demure.

He never stops playing when Humans come—even to laugh or say a word to anyone—but his music is heard only by the other baby statues, and a few, select friends. The black swans are included for they have wondrous understanding.

I was more than pleased, you may be sure, when he played me a little melody—full of splashy, fountain notes and warm, sunny earth-tones and misty-dell-like rests. Now and then the sound of hoofs could be heard and I fancied a Centaur was passing by. There were chuckly tones and rumbling bass and I truly believe the Big God Pan, himself, was cavorting in glee behind the columns.

The Wood Nymph did a toe-dance and almost lost her balance—so eager



"I heard a hoarse croak. It was the Frog who is with a boy."

In the Colonnade

was she not to miss one beat. Then, tucking her cornucopia under one fat, little arm, she clapped gleefully.

“He doesn’t play like that for everybody,” she told me when I glanced her way. I was sure he was playing just for me, but it was evident Wood Nymph felt quite as certain that it was all for her little majesty.

I heard a hoarse croak in the distance and moved on. It was the frog who is with a boy though the name-plate says, “Boy with Frog.”

“Don’t take it so to heart,” the frog admonished. The boy laughed. I looked from one to the other in astonished chagrin—for the laugh was plainly at me.

“Young Pan’s music,” said the Boy, explanatorily, “is just for—whoever hears it.”



"Farther on I found a boy holding a big fish
in his arms."

In the Colonnade

The frog put in—rather meanly, I thought—“Then it’s no compliment to her.”

The Boy’s reply cheered me immensely. “It’s more of a compliment than you think,” quoth he, “for Young Pan only lets them hear his music when he takes a special fancy to them.”

A bit farther on I found a boy holding a big fish in his arms, panting furiously. His fat little cheeks were almost bursting with merriment.

“He almost got away,” the youngster chortled, “for I was dancing to Pan’s music, too.”

I was a bit sorry for the fish, because I knew he could hear the cool splash of the lagoon and I thought the Boy’s arms must be an uncomfortably-warm place for a fish.



“Youth was stretching. I am inclined to think she had been napping.”

In the Colonnade

I don't believe Young Pan had sent his music as far as the statue of Youth, for she was stretching, as she always is in the daytime. I am inclined to think she had been napping, rather than dancing to a wild strain of music. She yawned a little as I paused before her, so I moved on. A yawn is embarrassing, even if it is indulged in by a little bronze statue.

But I turned again, after I had gone a few paces and was glad, indeed, that I did so. Youth is a trifle older than the other babies of the Colonnade. Perhaps she is nearing the age when little girls grow a bit shy. At any rate the distance gave her courage. Her face had grown saucily sweet. Dimples played hide and seek in her pretty cheeks and she gayly waved me a parting salute with her dainty, expressive hands.



"I reached the dear baby holding his ball to his breast."

In the Colonnade

When I reached the dear baby holding his ball to his breast—and so inadequately labeled “Garden Figure”—I started involuntarily to gather him into my arms, for he is quite irresistible. He didn’t quite understand, however, and feared I sought his most precious possession—so he drew back instinctively and shook his head at me.

I reassured him as best I could, but I guess he was a bit too young to understand a Human’s gestures, so again I hastened my foot-steps and found myself in the presence of the Duck Baby.

My sympathies should have been aroused for the ducks—poor things—as they had been for the fish. But the Duck Baby is so happy holding them to her little breast that I quite overlooked it, lest she should be afraid that I wanted



She grinned in reply and her fat, little cheeks
creased all up."

In the Colonnade

to take her pets away from her. I merely waved my hand and called a good morning. She grinned in reply and her fat, little cheeks creased all up, almost closing her eyes for a few minutes.

Looking around I caught sight of the Sun Dial Boy and, thinking, as Humans do, of the time, I rushed across. I had forgotten how very early it was and that a sun dial cannot tell you the time until the sun comes up to point it out with the finger of his shadow.

The Boy looked up with large-eyed surprise and spoke as if I had asked him the time, when I had only thought it.

“You shouldn’t mind about the time,” he announced, “I don’t. This is a chameleon I have here and I do care about him. Chameleons are real and Time’s just a make-believe that Humans have invented.”



"I left the Sun Dial Boy absorbed in the antics of his little pet."

In the Colonnade

I agreed that the little lizard was much more important than Time and left the Sun Dial Boy absorbed in the antics of his little pet—which hops a great deal at dawn for he has to get all his exercise before the sun needs him as an indicator.

I left the colonnade with soft tread and was about to depart for the World of the Humans when I heard a gentle lullaby. It was scarcely articulate, but I traced it, nevertheless, to the Bird Fountain.

How sturdily the little figure stood and how tenderly he held his fingers as a nest for the bird! The three frogs below him were speechless with delight, the bird and boy entirely absorbed, and I caught my breath as I watched and listened.



"Lovingly was the baby boy singing to his birdie."

In the Colonnade

Lovingly was the baby boy singing to his birdie. I didn't interrupt him, but crept away with my heart echoing the joyous music I had heard.

The sun was beginning to peep over the distant hills and I knew that my visit with the Baby Statues was over. Regretfully and hastily I left the scene of my wonderful adventure, feeling a good deal like Alice in Wonderland.

I did not want to go through the colonnade again and see them all motionless and silent. I knew that Young Pan could not let me hear his music and the others could not speak to me or listen, while there were other folks about—so I stole out of the back door, hugging my memories—and this is the first time I have confided in Humans about that marvelous dawn.



